

[E.R. Kaiser]

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Francis Donovan

Thomaston—Nov. 21 '38

E.R. Kaiser -

"Thought of another story about the Criterion club since the last time I saw you. I'm not going to give you some of the details, but I'll tell you the most important facts and let you piece it together. We used to have a man here in town was always trying to promote [?] stock deals.

"I'm not saying they weren't honest, but it's likely that he was misled on some of them. One of his pets was a gold-mine stock issue that he tried to peddle.

"He wanted to interest the men in town who had money, naturally, so he asked for permission to bring this mining expert to [?] the Criterion club to give a talk on the mine and a demonstration of the value of the deposit. You [?] couldn't pull anything like today because people are wise to all those old gags-and even then members of the club were too skeptical to put faith in it.

"Some of the boys got together and agreed to have some fun with the promoters. The local man brought his guest to town in the afternoon with all his paraphernalia, including the mine deposit, and they visited the club and left the stuff in a locker there. After they went out, some of the members opened the locker, and took out the sand that had the gold deposit in it, and substituted ordinary soil.

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"The big [?] demonstration took place that night, and [?] of course the mining expert couldn't find enough gold in his dirt to fill a tooth.

"And the [?] lads that [?] pulled the stunt kept egging him on, saying: [?] 'There's a speck there!' and 'Whats that shining there?' and so [?] on. Mad? They were madder than hell, the both of them."

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Art Botsford:

"I been talking to Frank [?] Hoyt about that old bell. Frank's been to see Gibbs (one of the company superintendents) and Gibbs is going to speak to the higher-ups about it—thinks probably we can save it from going to scrap after all. "Frank says if we can get things started about makin' a monument out of it, he'll do the castin' and engravin' and all for nothin'. That'll be his contribution to the good work, he says.

"You was down to the tower clock department was you? Did they show you the old bell? It's over in the old building, that's right. I can remember climbin' up in the tower to look at it when I was a kid— [?] that's our Liberty Bell, you might say. [?] "You find the record of that tower clock? You should have,if 'twas in the book. I can remember workin' on that shipment,packin' it in boxes, and I know they sent it over the mountains on llamas,don't let them [?] tell you it was mules.

"They made one once that was shipped to some foreign country and the boat sank,'fore it ever got there. They had to make the whole thing over again,but of course it was insured.

"I guess I forgot to you about the one they made for the rich old fellow somewheres down on Long Island. You [?] see that one on Woodruff's [?] barn,that small? Well,this one was just like it,made it for this rich old man, and he put it on his stable,where it would always be in sight whenever anyone wanted to know the time.

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"Well [?] sir, one time his [?] daughter had to catch a train [?] somewhere —it was very important, wherever it was, and she was all packed and everything, ready to go, and she looked at the clock on the barn, and it said quarter to nine. So, she thinks, I've got plenty of time, and she sits down and begins to read a book. She looked at it a little while later and 3 she jumped pretty near out of her skin, because it still said quarter to nine. The long and short of it was she missed her train—the clock had stopped. She called her old man, and he got hoppin' mad. He went out to look at the clock and he found that a whole bunch of pigeons had roosted there and that's what stopped it. What did he do but run back into the house and get a shotgun and blaze away at those birds.

"I can see that darn dial [?] yet, the way it came back. It was full of gunshot holes—a hell of a mess.

"Old man Gordon was in charge of the tower clock department, then, a good man on tower clocks. [?] That one up on the church up in Plymouth—that's made of wood. [?] He fixed that up when it went on the bum.

"What did [?] you say? I didn't tell you about the old clock shop they used to have at the Sailor's Home? Yes, I forgot it, slipped up on that one, but I knew about it. I just forgot it that's all. [?] The Blakeslee family. [?] Yes, I knew all about it.

"I told you about all [?] the others, anyway, you'll find I didn't miss many of them. And say, I got something here, hasn't got anything to do with clocks, but I want to show it to you. It's over eighty years old." [?] (Brings out an apple in remarkable state of preservation.) "Yessir, over eighty years old. It's stuffed with cloves. Used to be the fashion to stuff 'em and keep 'em..... Come up again, if I can help you out on anything."

The appended clipping from the Thomaston Express is another [?] illustration of the ramifications of the [?] business which has carried the [?] name of shrewd old Seth Thomas all over the world. In spite of the [?] streamlining of the industry and the

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introduction [?] throughout of modern methods of manufacture, [?] distribution, and promotion, it is doubtful if it ever again [?] will reach the extensive proportions it attained in years past.